

ANALYTICAL STUDY

OF THE AHĀDĪTH ABOUT

THE IMĀM MAHDI^{AS}

AND

THE PROMISED MESSIAH^{AS}

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FOREWORD

One of the objections raised against the claims of the Promised Messiah, Hadhrat Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad^{as} of Qādiān, is that his claims are inconsistent with the prophecies found in ahādīth as compiled, narrated and explained by scholars of the previous centuries. Though Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamā`at firmly believes in ahadīth but judge their authenticity on the Qur`ānic scale. The Promised Messiah^{as} says:

"It should be the duty of our Jamā`at that if a hadīth is not contrary and against the Holy Qur`ān then they should act upon it even it is of least level and prefer it over man-made fiqh." (Review of Batālwī Chakrālvī Debate P-6)

However, as far as the ahadīth about the Promised Messiah^{as} and Imam Mahdī, are concerned, a large number of these are not only contradictory with each other, having weak chains of narrators, but also against the well-founded principles of Qur`ān. It is a historical fact that many such ahadīth were fabricated during Abāsīd and Ummayad period to please the rulers and apply the signs mentioned therein on them. Probably that is why the compilers of most authentic books of ahadīth, *Imām Mālik^{rh}*, *Imām Bukhārī^{rh}* and *Imām Muslim^{rh}*, did not add these ahadīth in their books.

Non-Ahmadi Muslim scholars know these contradictions very well and left with no alternative but to fabricate false reconciliations and wrong interpretations. Many previous and modern scholars, including Ibn-e-Khuldun; Qazi Suleman Salman Mansurpuri, Ubaidullah Sindhi, and Habibur-Rahman Siddiqui Kandhalvi, have either rejected these ahadīth or expressed their serious doubts about them.

NOT A TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

The analysis of these ahādīth presented here is not based on technical grounds, i.e., checking the authenticity or otherwise of the chain of narrators but by showing them being against the Qur`ānic principles, self-contradictory in nature and their more contradictory and confusing interpretations by non-Ahmadi Muslim scholars. Ironically, the non-Ahmadi Muslim scholars demand us to have

blind faith in the concocted interpretations of these ahadīth as if these are divinely revealed the minutest suspicion about which can throw us out of the pale of Islam. Allāh says that such was the method of the scribes of the Bible:

[2:80] فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ قَ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا طَ فَوَيْلٌ لَّهُمْ مِمَّا كَتَبْتُ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَ وَيْلٌ لَّهُمْ مِمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ

Woe, therefore, to those who write the Book with their own hands, and then say: This is from Allah, that they may take for it a paltry price. Woe, then, to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for what they earn.

QUR`ĀNIC TEACHINGS ABOUT PROPHECIES AND SIGNS

❖ BELIEF IN THE UNSEEN

It is a great tragedy that the non-Ahmadi Muslim scholars have literally forsaken the Holy Qur’ān and do not consult it to settle their disagreements. Contrary to the prevalent mind-set of “*seeing is believing*” of non-Ahmadi Muslim scholars, the Holy Qur’ān says that the righteous are those who believe in unseen:

[2:3] ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ بِهِ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ [2:4] الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَ يُقْيِمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَ مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

[2:3] This is a perfect Book; there is no doubt in it; it is a guidance for the righteous, Who believe in the unseen and observe Prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them;

❖ THOSE WHO DEMAND SIGNS DO NOT BELIEVE AT ALL

Allāh says that those who demand for visible signs do not ultimately believe even if they are shown all the signs:

... وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كُلَّ أَيَّةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا ... [6:26]
... And even if they see every Sign, they would not believe therein...

It is further mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān that they strongly swear that they would surely believe if any sign is shown to them, but Allāh categorically tells that they would not believe even if they see the signs.

[6:110] وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لِنْ جَاءَتْهُمْ أَيْةٌ لَّيْوْمَنْ بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْأَيْتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

And they swear their strongest oaths by Allāh that if there came to them a Sign, they would surely believe therein. Say, ‘Surely, Signs are with Allāh. But what should make you understand that when the Signs come, they will not believe?’

❖ BAŞIRAH NOT BAŞARH

The Holy Qur'ān distinguishes between the sight of the heart (başīrah) and the sight of the eye (başarh). Başīrah is used to express the enlightenment of the heart whereby the spiritual man can understand spiritual things with as much certainty as the common man sees objects with the sight of the eye. The Holy Qur'ān directs the Holy Prophet^{sa} to proclaim that he and his followers are on the way of “başīrah”, the sure knowledge.

[12:109] قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Say, ‘This is my way: I call unto Allāh on sure knowledge, I and those who follow me. And Holy is Allāh; and I am not of those who associate gods with God.’

In a hadīth, the Holy Prophet^{sa} is quoted as saying that the Jews and the Christians were divided into 72 sects but my Ummah shall be divided into 73 sects; all of them but one are in fire. His companions asked the sign of that saved sect. He replied that it is the one who shall be on mine and my companions path. (*Tirmidhi – Kitabul Iman Bab Iftiraq Hadhihil Ummah*)

This hadīth read in the light of the above quoted verse (12:109) explicitly shows that the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his companions are on the path of başīrah, i.e., they see and believe in the signs through their hearts and not through their eyes. Thus,

those who insist on seeing signs fulfilled with their physical eyes are certainly not on the path of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his companions and consequently not among the only one saved sect.

❖ NO FAITH ACCEPTED AFTER SHOWING SIGNS

The Holy Qur'an and the Hadīth of the Holy Prophet^{sa} tell us that once the signs appear visibly, then belief in them does not profit anyone,:

[6:159] هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيهِمُ الْمَلَكُهُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ بَعْضُ أَيْتِ رَبِّكَ طَبَرِيَّ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيَ بَعْضُ
أَيْتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ أَمْتَثُ مِنْ قَبْلٍ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا حَيْرًا طَبَرِيَّ قُلْ انْتَظِرُوْنَا إِنَّا
مُنْتَظِرُوْنَ

Do they expect aught but that angels should come to them or that thy Lord should come or that some of the Signs of thy Lord should come? The day when some of the Signs of thy Lord shall come, to believe in them shall not profit a soul which believed not before, nor earned any good by its faith. Say, 'Wait ye, we too are waiting.'

Hadhrat Abu Huraira^{ra} narrates that Allāh's Apostle^{sa} said, "The Hour will not be established until the sun rises from the West: and when the people see it, then whoever will be living on the surface of the earth will have faith, and that is (the time) when no good will it do to a soul to believe then, if it believed not before." (Bukhari Kitabul Tafsīr)

THE SCRIPT PREPARED BY THE SCHOLARS

When non-Ahmadi Muslim scholars find them unable to reconcile these contradictory ahādīth, they had no alternative but to select a few from the pile of these ahādīth, draft a script and make the Muslims believe that these are the only authentic ahādīth on this subject. A Deobandi scholar, Syed Badr Alam Meerthi, in a chapter titled "Al-Imam Al-Mahdi" of his book "Tarjuman-us-Sunnah" has admitted that the scholars arranged the scattered pieces of these ahādīth in self-made chronological order and developed a story out of them. He further explained that it is wrong to attribute this self-arranged story to the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Mufti Nizam-ud-din Shamezai has also testified this fact by reproducing

this statement in his book “*Aqeeda Zahoor-e-Mahdi*” (Belief of Appearance of Mahdī).

It is, therefore, incumbent upon us that instead of trying to prove the claim of the Promised Messiah^{as} in accordance with these self-contradictory ahādīth, their analytical study is presented before the readers and show them how these ahādīth are against the Holy Qur`ān. For this purpose, first of all we need to see what are Qur`ānic teachings about the signs of advent of a Prophet and the prophecies about him.

PROPHECIES ABOUT THE HOLY PROPHET^{sa} IN THE BIBLE

Though non-Ahmadi Muslim scholars insist on verbatim fulfillment of the signs about Imam Mahdī and the Promised Messiah, sometime they are left with no option but to interpret the signs. For example, they say that by ‘breaking cross and killing swine mean to prove Christianity a false religion.

Interestingly, these scholars do not take the prophecies about the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his companions^{ra} word to word, found in the Bible and other scriptures and interpret them. For example, in Deuteronomy 33:1 it is mentioned: "The LORD came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran". Every Muslim scholar interprets the coming of LORD from these three places as coming of Hadhrat Mūsā^{as}, Hadhrat Ḥisā^{as} and Hadhrat Muhammad^{sa}, respectively.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Non-Ahmadi Muslim scholars reject the claims of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian as the Imam Mahdī and the Promised Messiah. These scholars uphold the view that the signs prophesied for the Imam Mahdī and the Promised Messiah have not so far appeared. They insist to see visible signs with their physical eyes which reminds us the similar attitude of the Pharisees and the Sadducees of the time of Jesus^{as} who rejected his claim of being their Messiah, on the same grounds. The Holy Qur`ān mentions that it is the Jewish attitude to demand to see physical signs to believe in a prophet:

[2:56] وَ إِذْ قُلْتُمْ لِيُوسُى لَئِنْ تُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَى اللَّهَ جَهْرًا فَأَخَذَتُكُمُ الصُّعْقَةَ وَ أَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

And remember when you said: ‘O Moses, we will by no means believe thee until we see Allah face to face;’ then the thunderbolt overtook you, while you gazed.

The Jewish scholars, since the time of Jesus^{as} till date, state that the signs and the criteria, mentioned in their scriptures about the appearance of the Messiah, did not fulfill in Jesus^{as}. Therefore, they rejected his claim as the Jewish Messiah. In a book “*Mashiach—Principles of Mashiach and the Messianic Era in Jewish Law*” Rabbi J. Immanuel Shochet writes:

“The belief in the coming of Mashiach and the Messianic redemption is one of the fundamental principles of the Jewish faith. Every Jew must believe that Mashiach will arise and restore the kingdom of David to its original state and sovereignty, rebuild the Bet Hamikdash (Holy Temple of Jerusalem), gather the dispersed of Israel, and in his days all the laws of the Torah shall be reinstated as they had been aforetimes. Whoever does not believe in him, or who does not look forward to (and anticipate) his coming, denies not only [the words of] the other prophets but also [those of] the Torah [the Five Books of Moses] and of Moses our Teacher!”

In Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol-14, under the word ‘Messiah’ it is written:

MESSIAH... (“the Anointed [King]”; a charismatically endowed descendant of David who the Jews of the Roman period believed would be raised up by God to break the yoke of the heathen and to reign over a restored kingdom of Israel to which all the Jews of the Exile would return.

Thus, according to the Jews, the Messiah:

Shall be a descendant of King David; Restore the Kingdom of Israel; Gather the dispersed of Israel; Rebuild the Holy Temple of Jerusalem; and Establish laws of Torah;

Apparently, none of these above signs and criteria fulfilled in Jesus^{as}, therefore, the Jewish scholars, who were looking for visible fulfillment of these signs, rejected him as their Messiah.

Christians raise the same kind of objections when they are informed about the prophecies of the Holy Prophet^{sa} in the Bible. While describing a dialogue between a *Nestorian Patriarch, Timothy I*, and *Abbasid Caliph, Al-Mahdī*, *Theodore Pulcini* writes in his book “*Exegesis as Polemical Discourse: Ibn Hazm on Jewish and Christian Scriptures*”:

“Timothy also asserts that if Muhammad had been mentioned in the gospel, it would have been necessary that his name, his mother and his people be explicitly announced in the books, as one finds written regarding the coming of Christ, Peace be upon him, in the Torah and Prophets. But absolutely nothing of the sort is mentioned regarding Muhammad (in the Torah and Prophets), and mention is never made of him in the gospel.”
(Footnote – P-17)

SIMILARITIES WITH JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

The Holy Qur`ān tells us that the opponents of true Prophets always raise similar objections against them, as if they have been recommended by the previous generations of opponents to act and say like that.

كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مُّثُلَ قَوْلِهِمْ طَشَابَهُتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ طَ

[2:119] ...Likewise said those before them similar to their saying. Their hearts are alike---

[51:54] Have they made

[الذریت-53] أَتَوَاصُوا بِهِ ۝
it a legacy to one another?

The Holy Prophet^{sa} has also foretold that in latter-days, Muslims will follow the ways of Jews and Christians.

Narrated Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri: The Prophet^{sa} said, “You will follow the ways of those nations who were before you, span by span and cubit by cubit (i.e.,

inch by inch) so much so that even if they entered a hole of a mstigure, you would follow them.” We said, “O Allah’s Apostle! (Do you mean) the Jews and the Christians?” He said, “Whom else?” (Bukhari – Chapter ‘Holding fast to the Book (Qur`ān) and Sunnah)

As the Jews were expecting their Messiah to be a descendant of David, restore the Kingdom of Israel and bring all nations under their rule, likewise, non-Ahmadi Muslim scholars are waiting for a Messiah who shall be a descendant of Hadhrat Fatima^{ra}, restore their past glory and sovereignty and establish their hegemony over all the nations.

The similarity of the non-Ahmadi Muslim scholars with the previous generation of the opponents, i.e., Jews and Christians is further manifested in the following statement of a non-Ahmadi Muslim scholar, a staunch opponent of the Promised Messiah^{as}. In one of the above citations, the Christian priest demands the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, his mother and his people to have been mentioned in the Gospel as the necessary evidence of his truthfulness. Mufti Muhammad Shafi, replicating him, says that had there been any prophet after him, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} must have explicitly mentioned the name and all other necessary information about the advent of that Prophet.

“But [the Holy Prophet^{sa}] never mentions, even in a single hadīth, that after me a Prophet shall be born, so you must believe in him and obey him, although It was the first and foremost duty of a loving and merciful Prophet that he makes his Ummah fully aware of the detailed circumstances of the forthcoming Prophet, inform his name, location, birth, history, features, parents’ name etc, so that people have no ambiguity in recognition of the forthcoming Prophet.(Khatm-e-Nabuwwat kamil Part-2, P-296)

While demanding these explicit and detailed information to accept the Promised Messiah^{as}, Mufti Muhammad Shafi never thought for a moment that these are not available even for the Holy Prophet^{sa} in the Torah and the Gospel. We may ask him if it would be then rightful for the Jews and the Christians to reject the Holy Prophet^{sa} on the same grounds on which he is rejecting the Promised Messiah^{as}?

In the following table, similar beliefs of Jews and Muslims about the coming of Messiah / Mahdī are mentioned.

<u>JEWS</u>	<u>NON-AHMADI MUSLIMS</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>The Prophet Elijah physically ascended to heavens (2 Kings 2:11) and shall return to earth before Messiah (Malachi 4:5)</i> ❖ <i>Messiah shall be a descendant of David</i> ❖ <i>Messiah shall come from Bethlehem</i> ❖ <i>⁶ “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.⁸ The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den.⁹ They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>The Prophet Jesus^{as} physically ascended to heavens and shall return to earth. Mahdī shall appear before him.</i> ❖ <i>Mahdī shall be from the progeny of the Holy Prophets^a</i> ❖ <i>Messiah shall descend in Damascus and Mahdī shall come from Makka</i> ❖ <i>The Prophet^{sa} said: “Jesus son of Mary will be a just administrator and leader of my Ummah. He will break the cross, kill the pigs, and abolish the jizyah (tax on non-Muslims). He will not collect the Sadaqah, so he will not collect sheep and camels. Mutual enmity and hatred will disappear. Every harmful animal will be made harmless, so that a small boy will be able to put his hand into a snake’s mouth without being harmed, a small girl will be able to make a lion run away from her, and a wolf will go among sheep as if he were a sheepdog. The earth will be filled with peace</i>

<p><i>full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:6-9(NKJV)</i></p> <p>❖ ²⁵<i>The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD. (Isaiah 65:25(NKJV)</i></p>	<p><i>as a container is filled with water. People will be in complete agreement, and only Allah will be worshipped. Wars will cease, and the authority of Quraysh will be taken away. The earth will be like a silver basin, and will produce fruits so abundantly that a group of people will gather to eat a bunch of grapes or on a pomegranate and will be satisfied. A bull will be worth so much money, but a horse will be worth only a few dirhams. (Ibn-e-Maja Kitabul Fitn)</i></p>
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THE CLAIM OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH^{as} IS BASED ON THE HOLY QUR'ĀN

Before discussing these ahādīth, it is pertinent to mention here that the claim of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulām Ahmad^{as} of Qādiān, the Imam Mahdī and the Promised Messiah, is based on the Holy Qur'ān and not on the basis of these self-contradictory and inconsistent ahādīth. Explaining this fact, the Promised Messiah^{as} says:

"Then Maulawi Sanaullah Sahib says that how is it that the idea of the prophecy of the Promised Messiah came to you? It was taken from the ahādīth. Then why is it that the ahādīth and the signs are not being accepted? This simple-minded one is either speaking due to fabricated lies or simply due to foolishness. However, in his rebuttal we swear by God, the Exalted, and state that this claim of ours is not based on ahādīth, but rather the Holy Qur'ān and the revelation which has been revealed upon me. Of course, in order to substantiate, we do present those ahādīth which go hand-in-hand with the Holy Qur'ān and which do not oppose my

revelations; however, the rest of the ahādīth we get rid of them. Even if there were no ahādīth in the world, even then there would be no fault with this claim of mine. God has presented so many times the Holy Qur’ān in my revelation. Hence, you would see in Braheen-e Ahmadiyya, with respect to this claim, there has been no mention of ahādīth, rather in so many places God, the Exalted, has presented the Holy Qur’ān in my revelation.” (Ijaz-e-Ahmadi (Zameema Nuzool-ul-Masih) P-36, Ruhani Khazain Vol-19 P-140)

He also stated that the standard of his truthfulness is like that of the previous prophets:

“I proclaim on the basis of Divine revelation that I am the one who was to come. Whoever wishes, can demand from me proof of my truthfulness according to the manner in which God Almighty has always proved the truthfulness of the Prophets^{as}.” [Malfuzat, vol. 4, p. 39]

THE PROMISED MESSIAH^{AS} SAYS ABOUT THESE AHĀDĪTH

Explaining the true nature and kinds of these ahādīth the Promised Messiah^{as} writes:

“Mine and my Jama`at’s belief about Mahdī and Promised Messiah is that all ahadīth about coming of Mahdī are not reliable and trustworthy. To me, they are under three kinds of criticism, or you can say that they are only of three kinds. First, those ahadīth that are fabricated and wrong and their narrators are blamed of lies and dishonesty, thus no righteous Muslim can trust them. Secondly the ahadīth that are weak and broken and because of mutual contradictions and disagreements cannot be trusted upon. Renowned Imams of hadīth have not either mentioned them altogether or with criticism and doubt. They have not testified these traditions by not confirming the truth and honesty of their narrators. Third category of such ahadīth are those that are though correct and authenticated by many ways but they have either been fulfilled in the past and no waiting period remains for them, or no outwardly Khilafat and battles are mentioned in them. Only

a Mahdī, i.e., a guided person is heralded in them. It is not only hinted but also explicitly stated that his kingdom and Khilafat shall not be outwardly and that, he would neither fight nor shed blood. He shall have no army but establish faith with the power of spiritual concentration as stated in hadīth “لا مهدى الا عيسى” No Mahdī except Isa” in the book of Ibn-e-Maja known with the same name and in Hakim’s Mustadrik narrated by Anas bin Malik. Muhammad bin Khalid Jundi has narrated from Iban bin Saleh who narrated from Hassan of Basara who narrated from Anas bin Malik who narrated from the Holy Prophet^sa. The meaning of this hadīth is that there shall be no Mahdī except that who shall come in the disposition and teaching-style of Isa^as. He shall neither fight the evil nor do battles but spread guidance through examples and heavenly signs. The hadīth stated by Imam Bukhari in his Sahi Bukhari supports this hadīth the wordings of that are “يَصْرُعُ الْحَرْبَ Nadha-ul-Harb” means that the Mahdī whose other name is Promised Messiah shall abolish religious battles altogether. He shall teach not to fight for religion, but spread religion through illuminations of truth, miracles of morality and signs of nearness of God. Therefore, truly I say that one who fights for religion at this time or supports such fighter or advises him apparently or secretly, or have such desires in his heart, is disobedient of Allah and His Messenger and has stepped out of the limits of their wills and obligations.” (Haqiqat-ul-Mahdī PP 3-6, RK Vol-14 PP 429-432)

He further writes:

It is the custom of Allāh that the signs written in the prophecies about a future prophet do not come to pass verbatim. Some of them are metaphors, sometime they are misunderstood and sometimes old accounts are perverted. Thus the righteous way is to benefit from fulfilled parts of these narrations, keeping in mind the prevailing time and its requirement. Had it been obligatory to match all the predetermined signs according to our understanding, all the prophets would have been abandoned, culminating in nothing but deprivation and unfaithfulness, as no prophet has ever passed for whom all the stipulated signs were literally fulfilled. There has been always some marginal deficiency in fulfillment of such signs...Study

ahadīth with great care. They differ so much about the Promised Mahdī as if they are a collection of contradictions. In some ahadīth it is written that Mahdī shall be Fatimid whereas other says that he shall be Abbassid. Some other ahadīth have the words "رجل من امتي Rajulun min Ummati" a man from my Ummah. Hadīth in Ibn-e-Maja has washed away all these ahadīth which has the words "لا مهدى الا عيسى La Mahdī Illa Isa" there is no Mahdī but Isa, no Mahdī except him. Further, there is no hadīth about Mahdī that is free of any criticism and none can be declared authentic. (Haqiqatul Wahi pp:216, 217)

IS IMĀM MAHDĪ MENTIONED IN THE HOLY QUR`ĀN?

Some people argue that the concept of Imam Mahdi is a non-Qur`anic concept and as there is no mention of him in the Holy Qur`an, therefore, we need not to believe in him. This argument arises out of a false concept of non-Ahmadi Muslims which says that Imam Mahdi and the Promised Messiah are two different personalities, one coming after the other. They believe that though the Promised Messiah is a Prophet, but the Imam Mahdi is not a Prophet. Therefore, people rightly ask the question that why do we have to have faith in him if he is not a Prophet, because we are only required to have faith in the Prophets.

The true nature of this concept is that Allah calls Prophets as 'Imam' and uses the title 'Imam Mahdi' which means 'a guided leader' for all the Prophets, as mentioned in the following verses of the Holy Qur`an:

[البقرة:125] وَ إِذْ أَبْتَلَنِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ طَقَانَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَاماً طَقَانَ

[2:125] And remember when his Lord tried Abraham with certain commands which he fulfilled. He said, 'I will make thee a Leader of men.' Abraham asked, 'And from among my offspring?' He said, 'My covenant does not embrace the transgressors.'

[الأنبياء - 21:74] وَ جَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا...

[21:74] And We made them leaders who guided *people* by Our command, and We sent revelation to them *enjoining* the doing of good works, and the observing of Prayer, and the giving of alms. And they were worshippers of Us *alone*.

[السجدة-25:32] وَ جَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدِيُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا...

[32:25] And We made from among them leaders, who guided *the people* by Our command, whilst they themselves were steadfast and had firm faith in Our Signs.

Beside these verses, it is also mentioned in two ahādīth mentioned in Ibn-e-Majah and Musnad Ahmad that there is no Mahdi but Isa (as). Therefore, we can conclude that Imam Mahdi is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an who is nobody other than a Prophet, as each Prophet is called Imam Mahdi and the 'One' who was expected to come in the latter-days is a Prophet.

CONTRADICTIONS

As mentioned in the beginning, most of the time non-Ahmadi scholars select a few ahādīth out of the pile of these contradictory ahādīth under discussion. Those who venture to present all of them or discuss this subject, try to reconcile these contradictions. One such non-Ahmadi Muslim scholar, Mufti Muhammad Shafi, collected, discussed, and interpreted 40 most authentic ahādīth regarding the descent of the Messiah in his book "Al-Tasreeh bimaa Tawatar fi Nuzool al-Maseeh" originally written in Arabic, later translated in Urdu and then in English by the title "Signs of the Qiyamah and the Arrival of the Maseeh". Two other books, "Antichrist (Maseeh Dajjal) and Descending of Jesus, May Peace be upon him)" by Imam Naasir-uddeen Al-Albaani; and "The Dajjāl and the return of Jesus" by Yusuf ibn Abdullah ibn Yusuf al-Wabil, were also consulted. Following topics, out of many, have been selected and discussed in this article to show that how different, rather contradictory information is provided in these ahādīth:

STATUS OF IMAM MAHDI

- (i) Where shall Hadhrat Isa^{as} Descend?

- (ii) Who shall be leading the prayer?
- (iii) Hadhrat Imam Mahdi^{as} shall be in the middle time or end time of this Ummah? and
- (iv) Who shall be Khalifa of this Ummah in latter-days?

WHERE SHALL HADHRAT ISA^{AS} DESCEND?

Mufti Muhammad Shafi quotes several ahādīth, in his above referred book, that tell us four different places of descent of the Messiah^{as}:

1-BAYT AL-MAQDIS IN PALESTINE

"In that period, there would be few Arabs and most of them will be in Bayt al-Maqdis. Their Imam (leader) would be a righteous man. (It will happen one day) their Imam will proceed to lead the congregation of Fajr when Isa Ibn Maryam will descend among them. So the Imam will step back a little so that he may ask Isa (عليه السلام) to lead prayers but Isa will place his hands on his shoulders and say, "Go forward and lead the congregation because the iqamah is called for you¹. So, the Muslims will be led in prayer by their own imam. (Ibn Majah, Abu Dawood, Ibn Khazaymah, and Hakim)" (P-75)

2-VALLEY AFEEQ IN JORDAN

"And Muslims will (finally) concentrate in the valley Afeeq¹. (Footnote¹. A 2-mile long valley in Jordan)...Then at the time of Fajr prayers, Isa Ibn Maryam عليه السلام will come. The Amir of the Muslims will invite him, O Rooh Allāh, come lead the congregational prayer!" He will say, "Some people of this Ummah are amir of some others, (so go ahead, you alone lead them)." Their amir will then lead them in prayers. Having offered prayers, `Isa عليه السلام will take his weapons and pursue Dajjal. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Abi Shaybah, Tabarani, Hakim, Al-Dur Al-Manthur). "(P-79)

"Sayyidina Huzayfah رضي الله عنه has said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: ... He will be last seen at Afeeq valley in Jordan. **Everyone who believes in Allāh and the Last day will be present in Jordan at that time.** (There will be war between the Muslims and the army of Dajjal and) he will kill one third of the Muslims, defeat one-third and drive them away, and let alone (the remaining) one-third. At night, some of the Believers will say to the others, "What stops you from meeting your (martyred) brothers 9and gaining martyrdom) to obtain the pleasure of your Lord?" Whoever has something to eat should give it to his (Muslim) brother. When it is dawn, offer the Fajr prayer earlier (than usual) and then march forward to fight the enemy."

As these people prepare to pray the Fajr, Isa عليه السلام will descend before them and offer the prayers with the congregation. Having offered the prayers, he will make a gesture with his hand suggesting that they should move away from between him and the enemy of Allāh (Dajjal, so that the latter may see him). (Mustadrik Hakim, Kanzul Ummal with reference to Ibn 'Asakir. This hadīth is also found in Muslim, in brief).

3-EASTERN SIDE OF DAMASCUS

"It is narrated by Sayyidina Aws bin Aws al-Thaqafi that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "Isa Ibn Maryam will descend on the eastern side of Damascus near a white minaret." (Al-Dur Al-Manthur in reference to Tabarani, Kanz-ul-Ummal, Ibn 'Asakir etc)." (P-89)

4-JABL DUKHAN

"The Muslims will flee to the Jabl Dukhan in Syria and Dajjal will pursue them and surround them there. This will be a very severe siege. The Muslims will be in much difficulty. **Then at the time of Fajr, Isa Ibn Maryam will come down.** He will address the Muslims, "What prevents you from going to this filthy liar?" The Muslims will say that this man is a jinn (and so it is difficult to fight him). In short, the Muslims will advance and Isa Ibn Maryam will be with them. The iqamah will be called for the prayers and

‘Isa عليه السلام will be requested, “O Rooh Allāh come forward (and lead the prayers).” He will say, “Your imam should come forward and lead the prayers. (Musnad Ahmad, Mustadrik Hakim)” (P-90).

The compiler of this book knows very well about these discrepancies. Offering an absurd and unfounded interpretation, he writes in a footnote on p-64:

“Allama Ali Qari رحمه الله عليه has stated on the authority of Ibn Kathir that according to a version the place is Bayt Al-Maqdis instead of eastern side of Damascus. In another version, the site is mentioned as Jordan and in yet another place of the Muslim army. Allama Ali Qari has preferred the version that gives the place as Bayt Al-Maqdis as transmitted by Ibn Majah. He said that if there is no white minaret in the Bayt Al-Maqdis these days, one will be built by that time surely.” (P-64)

However, he does not mention that on what authority Allama Ali Qari has preferred one place over the other three places and that why should we blindly follow him.

WHO SHALL LEAD THE PRAYER?

Another perplexing issue is regarding the identification of the Imam who shall lead the prayer right after the descent of the Messiah^{as}. Many ahādīth including those mentioned in Bukhari and Muslim, quoted by Muhammad Shafi, clearly indicate that the Promised Messiah^{as} shall be the Imam of the Muslim Ummah.

“Sayyidina Abu Huraira رضي الله عنه has reported that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “How will it be with you when Ibn Maryam will descend among you and your Imam at that is one of you (from my Ummah)².” (Bukhari and Muslim) (P-60)

“Sayyidina Jabir رضي الله عنه has reported the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ as saying, “A section of my people will not cease to fight for the truth and prevail till the Day of Resurrection.” He said, “Isa, the son of Maryam will then descend and their ameer (leader) will invite him to come and lead

them in prayer but he will say that Allāh had honored this people and so some of them are leaders over others (of them).” (Muslim, Ahmad) P-60

In these ahādīth the Holy Prophet^{sa} clearly mentions that ‘Ibn-e-Maryam’ (*Son of Mary*) is nobody else but a person from Muslim Ummah who shall be its leader. However, non-Ahmadi Muslim scholars make us believe that the word Imam in this hadīth means the one who shall be leading the prayer at the time of descent of Hadhrat Isa^{as}, and not the overall leader of Muslim Ummah. These scholars tell us that the Imam of the Muslims for prayer shall be a Muslim. Hadhrat Isa^{as} shall not accept his request to lead the prayer saying that this honor is for people among Muslim Ummah. The following questions arise over this interpretation:

- *Imam of the Muslims leading prayer is always a Muslim, a member of Muslim Ummah. Then why the Holy Prophet^{sa} specifically mentioned that at the time of descent of Hadhrat Isa^{as}, the Imam of the Muslims shall be from amongst them?*
- *It is argued that “Seal of the Prophet-hood” is not broken by the coming of Hadhrat Isa^{as} as he shall come as a member of the Muslim Ummah and a follower of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. If this is the case, then why cannot Hadhrat Isa^{as} lead the prayers, being one of us? He has been quoted as saying in the above ahādīth that your imam shall be one of you and that Allāh had honored this people and so some of them are leaders over others (of them)? If he comes as an “ummati”, then obviously he is one of us and among those who have been honored. Then why could not he lead the prayers, being a Muslim?*

This dichotomy has been explained in that book in a footnote as under:

“The literal translation of the word of the Hadīth فَامْهُمْ is “he will lead them”. Therefore, either of the two meanings may apply. (i) Henceforth, he will shoulder responsibilities of leadership over Muslims, there is no doubt concerning this and (ii) He will now lead them in prayers; a doubt arises concerning this meaning because we have seen in Hadīth # 2 that when he will descend, not he but Imam Mahdī will lead the men in prayers. This

doubt may be removed in two ways. One is what we have put in parenthesis in the text that to lead includes to command another to lead; for instance, it is said often that the king killed someone but the meaning is that he had him killed at his command, and the second is that, apart from the first prayer, he led the congregations after that. Thus, the meaning is that 'Isa عليه السلام would lead men in every prayer thereafter although Imam Mahdī would lead them at the time of his coming." (P-68, 69)

It is obvious from the above that words in parenthesis are added in the body of hadīth text to alter the true meanings of hadīth. Secondly, it is explained that Imam Mahdī shall lead the first prayer right after the descent of Hadhrat Isa^{as}. Let's see what happens after this first prayer is finished:

"In that period, there would be few Arabs and most of them will be in Bayt al-Maqdis. Their Imam (leader) would be a righteous man. (It will happen one day) their Imam will proceed to lead the congregation of Fajr when Isa Ibn Maryam will descend among them. So the Imam will step back a little so that he may ask Isa (عليه السلام) to lead prayers but Isa (عليه السلام) will place his hands on his shoulders and say, "Go forward and lead the congregation because the iqamah is called for you¹. So, the Muslims will be led in prayer by their own imam. When the imam would have finished the prayer, Isa عليه السلام would say, "Open the door!" The door would be opened and Dajjal would be found standing behind it. Seventy thousand Jews will be with him, each of them carrying a jeweled sword and wearing a precious thick garment. When Dajjal sees Isa عليه السلام, he will begin to dissipate as salt dissolves in water and he would flee. Isa would say to him, "Only one blow has been decreed on you from me and you cannot escape from it" So, he will confront him at the eastern gate of Ludd and slay him." (P-75)

This hadīth explicitly tells us that right after finishing his first prayer after his descent, Hadhrat Isa^{as} shall kill Dajjal. The explanation in the above quoted footnote tells us that Hadhrat Isa^{as} shall be the Imam leading the subsequent prayers after killing Dajjal. Now read the following hadīth keeping these two statements in mind that:

- i. *Hadhrat Isa^{as}, right after his descent, shall kill Dajjal after offering his first prayer behind Imam Mahdī and that;*
- ii. *He shall lead all the subsequent prayers after that.*

“Sayyidina Abu Huraira رضي الله عنه said that he heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say that ‘Isa Ibn Maryam would descend and (with the exception of the first prayer, the Fajr) he would lead Muslims (in the other prayers) and in the prayers when getting up from the bowing posture (ruk`u), he will say (in supplication)² after ‘سُمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمَدَهُ’ “May Allāh slay Dajjal and give supremacy to the Believers” (Sa`ayah, sharah waqayah in reference Ibn Habban, Majma` Az-zawa`id in reference Bazzar). P-84

This hadīth tells us that while offering and leading a prayer, which is, of course, a subsequent prayer after killing Dajjal, Hadhrat Isa^{as} shall recite a prayer raising his head from ruk`u that may Allāh kill Dajjal and give supremacy to the Muslims.

Now the questions arise here are:

- *Why would he pray to Allāh to help him to kill Dajjal as he has already killed him after finishing his first prayer?*
- *If he is going to kill Dajjal after his first prayer, doesn't it show that he shall be the Imam leading the first prayer?*
- *Why would Hadhrat Isa^{as} agree to be the Imam in subsequent prayers as he is stated to refuse to be the Imam on the plea that members of Muslim Ummah are honored of being imam over themselves? Would that honour be taken away from Muslim Ummah or Hadhrat Isa^{as} shall be included in Muslim Ummah after that first prayer?*

It cannot be argued that Hadhrat Isa^{as} would recite this prayer while offering prayer behind Imam Mahdī as the followers in congregational prayers do not say ‘سُمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمَدَهُ’. It is only the imam who says these words.

IMAM MAHDĪ AS IS IN THE MIDDLE OR IN THE END OF TIMES?

In the following two ahādīth, quoted in this book, the Holy Prophet^{sa} said that he is in the beginning of this Ummah and Hadhrat Isa^{as} shall be in the end of it. Note that Imam Mahdī is not mentioned altogether in these ahādīth.

"It is stated by Sayyidina Abdullah bin Umar رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "How can that Ummah perish when I am there in its early period and Isa in the final era." (Hakim, Kanz-ul-Ummal, Al-Dur Al-Manthur, Mishkat, Nasa'i)

"The front-rank taba'ee Jubayr bin Nufayr رحمه الله عليه has stated that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "Allāh will certainly not let that Ummah despair in whose beginning am I, and in whose last day is Isa". (Ibn Abu Shayba, Al-hakim, Tirmizi, hakim, Al-Dur Al-Manthur)". P-82

However, in the following hadīth, the Holy Prophet^{sa} has been quoted as saying that he is at the beginning of the Muslim Ummah, Imam Mahdī^{as} is in the middle and Hadhrat Isa^{as} is at the end.

"Sayyidina Ibn 'Abbas رضي الله عنه has stated that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said that such a people will never be destroyed who have me in their beginning and 'Isa عليه السلام in their concluding days and Mahdī in the intermediary³ period. (Nasa'I, Abu Na'eem, hakim, Ibn 'Asakir, Kanz Al-Ummal and Al-Siraj al-Muneer). " (P-85)

In some ahādīth, also quoted in this book, we read that Hadhrat Isa^{as} and Imam Mahdī^{as} shall be at the same time and same place and that both shall work in unison with each other. To reconcile this discrepancy, the compiler of this book has changed the universally accepted and applied meaning of the term '**middle**'. In the following footnote, the compiler says that middle means 'attached to the concluding period'.

(Footnote³: The intermediary period means attached to the concluding period and before it because 'Isa عليه السلام will come in the times of Imam

Mahdī and he will offer prayers in the leadership of Imam Mahdī as we have seen in earlier Ahādīth.) (P-85)

We know that to show a point that lies at equal distances from two opposite points, one on its right and the other on its left, we use the word ‘middle’ or ‘center’. The Arabic word for such situation is وسط or اوسط. If something is not right in the middle of two points but lies anywhere from point A to point B, we use the word ‘between’ or ‘in between’. The Arabic word for this situation is بين. The word used in the above quoted hadīth is اوسط not بين. The exact word used is اوسطها (in her middle), that has been translated by the compiler of this book as ‘intermediary’ and further explained in the above quoted footnote as ‘*attached to the concluding period*’. If, for argument sake, this translation and explanation is accepted as valid, even then it does not serve their purpose and does not join Imam Mahdī and Hadhrat Isa^{as} in common time and place. One thing attached to other does not mean included in it instead it means one thing after the other. The second thing starts where the first thing ends. This word cannot be used for any point adjacent to the endpoint. The compiler of the book has done a futile effort, rather committed a sin by changing the meaning of the word وسط and tried to prove his point on flimsy grounds.

TWO KHALIFA AT THE SAME TIME!!!

Another important issue that needs to be highlighted, but has been simply ignored by non-Ahmadi scholars is having two Khalifa at the same time. Ahādīth about Imam Mahdi^{as} and the Promised Messiah^{as} tell us that both are Khalifa for this Ummah.

Hadhrat Isa^{as} is Khalifa

“Beware, there shall be no prophet or messenger between Jesus, the son of Mary, and me. Remember, he shall be my Khalifa in my Ummah after me...”
Tibrani (P-95)

Imam Mahdi^{as} is Khalifa

"Thauban^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said: 'When you find the Mahdī, perform ba`it at his hands. You must go to him, even if you have to reach him across icebound mountains on your knees. He is the Mahdī, the Khalifa of Allāh.' Ibn-e-Majah Kitabul Fitn.

IF THERE ARE TWO KHALIFA, KILL ONE OF THEM!

However, a hadīth reported in Sahi Muslim tells us that if there are two Khalifa at the same time, the Muslims are instructed by the Holy Prophet^{sa} to kill the latter one.

It has been narrated on the authority of Aba Sa'id al-Khudri^{ra} that the Messenger of Allāh (may peace be upon him) said: When oath of allegiance has been taken for two caliphs, kill the one for whom the oath was taken later. (Sahi Muslim Kitabul Imarah Chapter 20-15: WHEN THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE HAS BEEN OBTAINED FOR TWO CALIPHS)

This problem can only be solved by believing that Imam Mahdī^{as} and the Promised Messiah^{as} are the two titles of one person and there are not going to be two Khalifa in this Ummah at the same time but one.

CONCLUSION

From the above it is quite clear and transparent that ahādīth are contradictory with each other. Therefore, they are not and cannot be made basis of the claim of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian being the Promised Messiah and the Imam Mahdī,. If we consider them, at any level of authenticity or as secondary source of information and containing signs of the Imam Mahdī^{as} and the Promised Messiah^{as}, even then we cannot take them literally and have to interpret them in the light of the Holy Qur'ān and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. The claims of the Promised Messiah^{as} are, by the grace of Allāh are absolutely proven on the basis of the Holy Qur'ān.